DC
JOHNS • BUSIEK • WOODS
No. 837
MAY 06
ACTION
COMICS
YEAR 1 LATER
UP, UP AND AWAY!
PART 2
DIRECT SALES
83711
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METROPOLIS –
The news hit this morning --
Daily Planet
LEX LUTHOR BANKRUPT
LEXCORP TO BE DISMANTLED?
-- DIRE STRAITS THAT MAY SPELL THE END FOR THE TROUBLED TECH GIANT, LONG THE UNDISPUTED LEADER IN THE FIELD.
ITS STOCK DROPPING 47% OVER THE LAST FOURTEEN MONTHS, AFTER REVELATIONS OF FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES, THE CONTROVERSIAL META-HUMAN GENETIC PROGRAM AND THE LOSS OF MANY PHYSICAL HOLDINGS --
-- AND WITH CONSUMERS AVOIDING LEXCORP BRANDS IN INCREASING NUMBERS --
-- INSIDER REPORTS ARE THAT THE BELEAGUERED BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL TAKE A VOTE NEXT WEEK ON WHETHER THEY SHOULD THROW IN THE TOWEL --
-- AND BREAK UP THE COMPANY, SELLING OFF PROFITABLE DIVISIONS IN ORDER TO COVER THEIR ENORMOUS -- AND RISING -- LOSSES.
BUT MOST DRASTICALLY AFFECTED BY LEXCORPS'S WOES MAY BE COMPANY FOUNDER AND LONGTIME C.E.O. ALEXANDER "LEX" LUTHOR --
-- WHOSE VERY PUBLIC TRIAL IS CONSIDERED RESPONSIBLE FOR MUCH OF THE COMPANY'S NEGATIVE IMAGE THESE DAYS.
THOUGH ACQUITTED ON ALL COUNTS, POLLS INDICATE MOST AMERICANS THINK LUTHOR WAS GUILTY, AND ESCAPED JUSTICE THROUGH LEGAL MANEUVERING.
ONLY YESTERDAY, LUTHOR ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO RETAKE THE REINS OF THE COMPANY --

-- BUT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHOSE INSTEAD TO OUST HIM, BUYING OUT HIS EQUITY IN THE COMPANY AND SEVERING ALL TIES WITH HIM.
IRONICALLY, LEXCORP'S ILL FORTUNES HAVE DEPRESSED THE COMPANY'S VALUE TO THE POINT THAT THE BUYOUT --
...and let me gaze upon the stars... tum-te-tum-te life te-tum-te Ju-piter and Mars...
in other words...
THERE YOU GO, MY LITTLE PRIZE. I'LL SEE YOU IN --
-- WILL NOT COVER HIS CONSIDERABLE LEGAL DEBTS, INCLUDING THE SETTLEMENT OF DOZENS OF LAWSUITS. LUTHOR MAY CONTEST THE OUSTER, OF COURSE --
-- BUT WHETHER HE HAS THE MONEY FOR ANOTHER PROTRACTED LEGAL BATTLE -- OR INDEED, WHETHER LEXCORP IS WORTH --
ENOUGH!
CLIK
IDIOTIC BABBLE LIKE THAT, A MAN CAN'T HEAR HIMSELF --
HM?

KRI SSSHHHHHH

YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO HAVE TO START USING THE DOOR FROM NOW ON. THESE MEETINGS ARE ROUGH ON MY LABS -- WHAT FEW I HAVE LEFT, THAT IS.
PSSSH
BOSS, BOSS. I THOUGHT YOU'D GET A GIGGLE OUT OF IT.
BIG BLUE DISMANTLED ALL HIS ROBOTS AFTER THAT RUCKUS WITH THE TITANS, BUT I MANAGED TO SWIPE THE SCHEMATICS FROM SOME KID IN TOKYO --
-- AND I BUILT MY OWN.
STILL HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE HEAT VISION, THOUGH. IT TAKES WAY TOO LONG TO BURN THROUGH PEOPLE.
YOU'VE REALLY GOT TO LOOSEN UP, BOSS -- LEARN TO HAVE A LITTLE FUN.
THAT'S WHAT LIFE'S FOR, YOU KNOW?

ENOUGH CLOWNING, TOYMAN. THERE'S WORK TO DO.
AND THIS IS THE KEY TO IT ALL.
I RECOVERED IT FROM THE RUINS OF HIS FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE. SUPERBOY USED IT AGAINST HIS DUPLICATE BEFORE I FULLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT WAS.
FUN, FUN, FUN!
IT'S GOT WORDS IN IT!
WHAT'S IT SAY?
WHAT IT SAYS ISN'T IMPORTANT. WHAT IT CAN DO, HOWEVER, IS.
IT'S CALLED SUNSTONE.
AN ELEMENT NATIVE TO KRYPTON, THE BASIS OF MUCH OF THEIR TECHNOLOGY. MEMORY CRYSTALS THAT STORE MORE DATA THAN ANY COMPUTER ON EARTH.
AND THAT'S ONLY THE START.
IT'S SPARKLY! CAN I --
NO. I WANT YOU TO PAY THE PRANKSTER A VISIT. TELL HIM HIS SERVICES ARE REQUIRED. WE NEED POWER -- VERY SPECIFIC POWER --
OH, AND DESTROY THAT THING. I DON'T WANT ANY UNNECESSARY REMINDERS OF THAT ALIEN AROUND.
HE'S BEEN GONE A YEAR -- TIME TO LET IT GO. TIME, ONCE AND FOR ALL --
-- TO FORGET ABOUT SUPERMAN.

Rocketed to Earth from the doomed planet Krypton, the baby Kal-El was found and raised by Jonathan and Martha Kent in Smallville, Kansas. Once the world-famous hero Superman, now powerless in the wake of an earth-shaking crisis, he fights for Truth, Justice & The American Way as...
CLARK KENT
...AND I THINK HE CRACKED A TOOTH.
SULLIVAN PLACE –
My face hurts. It feels like it's glowing, it's throbbing so much. I know I've been hit like this before -- I've lost my powers before, I fell out of a tree once onto Lana's tricycle --
I guess when you're invulnerable -- you forget.
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
LEX LUTHOR HAD YOU DRAGGED INTO AN ALLEY SO HE COULD BEAT YOU INTO HAMBURGER? HE MUST REALLY HATE THOSE ARTICLES.
BUT CLARK -- YOU MUST HAVE TWENTY POUNDS ON HIM, OR MORE, AND YOU'RE IN KILLER SHAPE.
WHY DIDN'T YOU FIGHT BACK?
I DID.
THE ARTICLE RAN TODAY, DIDN'T IT?

THAT'S HOW WE PUT THESE PEOPLE DOWN, LOIS -- LEX, INTERGANG, ANYONE. WE DIG OUT THE TRUTH, AND WE SHOW IT FOR THE WORLD TO SEE.
WITH LEX'S REPUTATION FINALLY DESTROYED, HE CAN'T MANIPULATE THE SYSTEM ANYMORE, CAN'T TRICK PEOPLE INTO TRUSTING HIM.
KEEP TALKING, SMALLVILLE. I LOVE IT WHEN YOU CRUSADE...
THIS ISN'T OVER YET.
NEAR THE END OF LEX'S TRIAL, THERE WERE ODD ATTACKS ON LEXCORP. WAREHOUSES BURNED, RESEARCH STATIONS BLOWN UP.
I THINK LEX WAS MAKING CONTINGENCY PLANS, STEALING DATA AND EQUIPMENT FROM HIS OWN COMPANY.
HE'S ALWAYS HAD DOZENS OF UNDERGROUND LAIRS --
-- WHERE ALL THE LEAD IN THE SEWERS AND SUBWAYS MADE IT HARD FOR ME TO FIND THEM.
AND YOU THINK YOU CAN FIND THEM NOW?
LEX LIKES TO THINK HE'S ALL INTELLECT -- BUT HE'S EMOTIONAL, ALWAYS HAS BEEN.
PUSH HIM HARD ENOUGH, HE'LL MAKE A MISTAKE. I DID IT AS SUPERMAN, I CAN DO IT AS CLARK.
HE ONCE TOLD ME THAT HE BELIEVED HE HAD THE ABILITY TO CURE CANCER, TO ELIMINATE FAMINE. BUT SUPERMAN WAS ALWAYS IN HIS WAY.
NOW THAT YOU'RE GONE, WHAT'S HE UP TO? WHAT'S HE USING ALL THAT ENERGY FOR?
NOTHING GOOD. I'M SURE OF THAT.
BUT I'LL FIND OUT. AND I'LL PUT HIM AWAY FOR IT.
USED TO BE, I COULD SEE HIM, HEAR HIM -- WHEREVER HE WAS. BUT WITH MY POWERS GONE --
-- IT'S LIKE I'M BLIND.

I REALLY THOUGHT THEY'D HAVE RETURNED BY NOW. BUT SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED --
-- CHANGED ME IN SOME FUNDAMENTAL WAY.
THOSE FIRST WEEKS -- ALL THE TESTS, ALL THE EXPERIMENTS...
ALL THAT HIGH-INTENSITY SOLAR BOMBARDMENT. AND ALL I GOT WAS A TAN.
YOU LOOKED GREAT WITH A TAN.
NOT LIKE YOU. THOSE BEACHES IN MAUI...
YOU KNOW, I USED TO FALL ASLEEP AT NIGHT LISTENING TO YOUR HEARTBEAT. I'D LET THE RHYTHM OF IT SURROUND ME, ROLL ME OFF TO DREAMLAND.

BUT NOW...
I CAN'T SEE THROUGH THINGS ANYMORE, OR HEAR MA PUTTERING IN THE KITCHEN IN SMALLVILLE -- AND THAT MAKES WHAT I DO SEE ALL THE MORE REAL.
MY ATTENTION ISN'T IN A MILLION PLACES ANYMORE -- I CAN FOCUS ON WHAT'S IN FRONT OF ME.
AW, HONEY...
WITHOUT MY SUPER-SENSES --
-- I FEEL ALMOST AS IF I HAVE A DIFFERENT KIND OF SUPER-SENSE.
A SENSE OF --
-- BEING HUMAN.

METRO SQUARE –
I've been hearing from a few sources that there are "recoveries" going on in the subways Heavy tech being moved quietly.
That makes me think Luthor I don't know where he's taking the stuff from, but I have some ideas
BOOP BEEP BEEP BIP
YOU THERE? I APPRECIATE THE HELP ON THIS.
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SUBWAYS. I KNOW LUTHOR'S GOT ROOTS THAT DEEP, BUT I WAS NEVER ABLE TO DIG THEM ALL OUT. TOO MUCH LEAD IN THE -- YEAH, I ALREADY SAID THAT, DIDN'T I?
NOW I'M TRYING IT CLARK KENT'S WAY.
THERE ARE DOZENS OF ABANDONED OR NEVER-FINISHED TUNNELS IN THE SUBWAY. MOST OF THEM ARE RUINS, OR USED ONLY FOR ACCESS.
I DID SOME CHECKING, THOUGH, AND 27 OF THEM ARE MAINTAINED REGULARLY.
NO ONE CAN TELL ME WHY. I'VE CHECKED OUT FOUR SO FAR.
LUTHOR DOESN'T LIKE TO GET HIS CLOTHES DIRTY. SO I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST HIM TO ALTER MAINTENANCE ORDERS TO --
-- I'M GETTING A LOT OF STATIC ON -- YOU THERE? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
DANGER
Signal's going in and out. Not surprising
But I think I may have found something

YOU'RE THERE AGAIN?
WELL, I'M LOOKING AT AN ARTFULLY GRUBBY SIGN FOR TRACK 13.
EXACTLY. SUPERSTITIONS.
THERE'S NO TRACK 13 ANYWHERE IN THE SYSTEM.
THERE'S A DOOR --
I HEAR VOICES.
HAVE TO BE QUIET FROM HERE ON IN. I'LL GIVE A SHOUT IF --
Signal's dead. Should have known it wouldn't reach down here.
But that electronic lock -- that whole door system -- those aren't part of any Metropolis subway plans I've hit paydirt.
Still, those voices. They don't sound like --
CHECK IT OUT...

I'M STEEL!
DAMN IDIOT. STEEL'S A BROTHER.
SHUT IT. WE GOT IN -- AND LUTHOR'S IN NO SHAPE TO STOP TO US TAKING THESE SUITS. CALL IT BACK PAY.
THESE ARE OUR TICKET INTO INTERGANG. WE BRING IN THIS MUCH FIREPOWER, AND WE'RE MADE.
Intergang?
I'm going to need some help here, but my phone's still not --
BREEP-A-DEEP! BREEP-A-DEEP!
OH, GREAT.
WHAT WAS--
THERE! HE'S SEEN US!
KEEP YOUR SHORTS ON, DOG.
"I GOT 'IM."
TARGET

KOOM!
NNH!
NNNG!
IT'S THAT REPORTER! GOT IT IN FOR INTERGANG--!
THIS IS GREAT! WE BRING HIS HEAD IN TOO, AN'--
HE'S RUNNING!
YEAH? WHERE'S HE GOING TO GO?
N-AIRH!
My arm'
I m about to go for the signal watch. But I remember the phone --
ARE YOU THERE? I COULD REALLY USE SOME--
I'm in the middle of the subway tracks There s a bright light coming.
It's not a train

HEYA, CLARK.

WE HEADED IN AS SOON AS WE LOST THE SIGNAL. TRIED TO *REINITIATE* CONTACT WITH YOU ONCE, BUT--

YEAH, I CAN FILL IN THE *REST*.

LET'S *DO* THIS.

AS FOR *YOU FELLAS* -- DON'T LET THE CHISELED GOOD LOOKS, THE WASHBOARD ABS AND THE POWER RING *FOOL* YOU.

IT'S THE LITTLE LADY TO MY LEFT WHO'S THE REAL THREAT -- A *MAD DOG* IN DANSKINS. I'VE ENJOYED WATCHING HER *BUST THE JAWS* OF GUYS LIKE YOU BEFORE --

-- AND *I THINK* IT'S ONLY FAIR TO WARN YOU BEFORE SHE STARTS IN ON YOU!

Green Lantern. Devil-may-care test pilot, intergalactic cop, and a longtime ally of mine in the Justice League

And Hawkgirl. Latest reincarnation of a centuries-old Egyptian warrior

Both of them agreed to help out on today's fact-finding excursion -- and I couldn't have asked for better backup.

My phone's linked in to Hal's ring, and Kendra's helmet

CAREFUL-- THE *MEN* MAY BE INEXPERIENCED, BUT THE ARMOR--

YOUR TOWN, *CLARK*. YOUR BAD GUYS.

YOU GUIDE, WE *DO*.

NNH!

AHH!

OKAY, YOU'LL WANT TO TAKE OUT THEIR *POWERPACKS*. THEY'RE SHIELDED, BUT YOU CAN GET AT THEM BY --

POWERPACKS?

T-HH!

I'M GOING FOR THEIR *HEADS*.

BREAK THE *MEN*, YOU KILL THE ARMOR.

Not what I'd do. But then, Luthor would arm the helmet force field, so it wouldn't have worked. As I'm thinking that, though -

GUYS!
TROUBLE --!
This time, it *is* a train
AAH!
HNH. THESE SUITS CAN SHATTER WHOLE *MOUNTAINS!* ONE TRAIN WON'T BE *NOTHIN'* AGAINST --
SKREEEEE
WH--?
AAH!
ARE YOU CRAZY?! THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THERE!
HUH?
I react without thinking, and shove him as hard as I can. Not that it's much
WHAT'RE YOU, SOME BIG *HERO?*
YOU WANNA SEE WHAT THESE'LL DO TO YOUR *HEAD?*

HEY, NOW.
YOU WOULDN'T HIT A GUY WITH GLASSES.
WH --
COME ON, KENT. TRAIN'S COMING.
BESIDES--
-- WE'RE DONE HERE.
The people gasp and point as we pass. Some of them cheer. It's an old, familiar sound, one I haven't heard in a while.
Above me, I can practically feel Hawkgirl smile.
She likes it. And why shouldn't she?
THIS GUY, G.L. HE SAVED EVERYONE ON THAT TRAIN CAR, AND ALMOST GOT HIMSELF KILLED. HE'S AS BANANAS AS YOU ARE.
REGULAR MAN WITHOUT FEAR, HM?

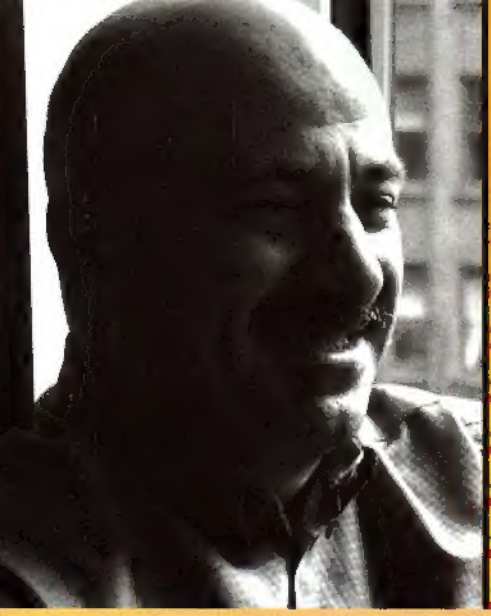
KID TURNED ON YOU, HUH? THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH 'EM -- EVEN WHEN THEY DON'T STICK IT TO YOU ON PURPOSE, THEY STILL GET YOU.
DROWN THE BRATS AT BIRTH, I SAY.
YOU'RE ALL HEART, JOHN.
I BEEN HEARIN' ABOUT YOU, LUTHOR. THAT YOU WERE THE LEADER OF THE SOCIETY. THAT YOU WEREN'T THE LEADER OF THE SOCIETY.
THAT YOU NEVER DID ANYTHING BAD YOUR WHOLE LIFE AND WERE LOCKED IN A CLOSET LIKE A WUSS THE WHOLE TIME WHILE A PHONY DID IT ALL.
CYNICAL.
ME, I THINK MAYBE YOU'RE JUST A LOSER. BUT I CAME ANYWAY, TO SEE WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME. YOU A LOSER, LEX?
OR YOU GONNA BE THE SEVENTEENTH GUY TO TELL ME YOU KILLED SUPERMAN?
I DID NOT KILL SUPERMAN. THOUGH I WOULD BE QUITE PLEASED IF I HAD I WAS OBSESSED WITH HIM FOR TOO MANY YEARS.
BUT HE IS THE PAST, NOW -- ULTIMATELY A DISTRACTION, A HICCUP IN THE LONG HISTORY OF METROPOLIS AND THE WORLD IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON.
STILL, I HAVE A LITTLE ACCOUNTING TO DO WITH THIS CITY. AND THAT'S WHY I CALLED THIS MEETING.
JOIN ME FOR A STROLL, AND I'LL --
AH-AH. STAY BACK.
THIS WHAT YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR?
OR MAYBE --

--THIS?
OH, YEAH. ENHANCED TITANIUM-ALLOY FRAME. PLASTISTEEL MUSCULATURE OVER FORCED-GROWTH VAT-CLONE ORGANICS. AND DRIVING IT ALL --
KRYPTONITE.
THAT'S THE CURRENT-MODEL, FRESHLY DETAILED METALLO.
LOSER OR NO, LUTHOR, I KNOW YOU'RE TRICKY. AND I KNOW YOU'VE HAD TROUBLE WITH THE K-ROCK IN THE PAST.
SO WE'LL TALK RIGHT HERE, OR I'LL HIT YOU WITH A CONCENTRATED K-RAD BLAST THAT'LL HAVE YOU IN A BODYBAG INSIDE OF A WEEK.
NO OFFENSE, MIND YOU.
SO WHAT IS IT, LUTHOR? WHADDYA WANT?
WHAT DO I WANT? THAT'S VERY SIMPLE, METALLO.
I WANT IT ALL. NO MORE, NO LESS.
I WANT IT ALL.

SULLIVAN PLACE –
I WANT TO THANK YOU TWO AGAIN FOR AGREEING TO --
The Intergang hopefuls have been turned over to the Metropolis Police, and the suits taken into custody by the S.C.U.
All that's left --
OH, STOP.
WHOOULP--!
-- is a quick trip home.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO THANK US, CLARK.
THOSE THUGS WOULD HAVE DONE A LOT OF DAMAGE IF YOU HADN'T LED US TO THEM. MAYBE THERE'S NO JUSTICE LEAGUE ANYMORE--
-- BUT WE CAN STILL WORK TOGETHER.
YOU SHOULD START UP THE LEAGUE AGAIN, HAL.
NOT WITH MY SINS. NOT YET.
WE NEED SOMETHING, THOUGH.
THERE'RE SO MANY PROBLEMS IN ST. ROCH THESE DAYS, I'VE HAD TO DROP OUT OF THE JSA TO DEAL WITH IT ALL.
I KNOW THERE'S BEEN...SOMETHING OF A VOID...
YES. THERE HAS.
LOOK. WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS A LONG TIME. AND YOU'RE DOING GOOD WORK AS A REPORTER, HELPING THE PEOPLE OF METROPOLIS.
BUT YOU COULD DO SO MUCH MORE. YOU JUST NEED THE TOOLS.
CLARK...

UP, UP, AND AWAY! CHAPTER TWO MILD-MANNERED REPORTER

GEOFF JOHNS & KURT BUSIEK—Writers • PETE WOODS—Artist
BRAD ANDERSON—Colors • NICK J. NAPOLITANO—Letters
TERRY & RACHEL DODSON—Cover Artists • ALEX SINCLAIR—Cover Colorist
RACHIE CASTRO—Associate Editor • MATT IDELSON—Editor
SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER



You know, it was around this time last year that DC Comics began counting down to INFINITE CRISIS. This year, all of Warner Bros. is counting down to this summer's biggest event, SUPERMAN RETURNS. And since the Man of Steel is one of our own, we wanted to be part of the celebration and help get the comics fans stoked for this epic feature.

For the last few months I've been working with the feature's screenwriters, Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris, and the main man himself, Bryan Singer, to prepare a series of prequel comics to set the stage for SUPERMAN RETURNS. When it was suggested we do comics to tie into the movie, these three asked to be involved. They love the character that much. Not sure if this has ever been done before, but if it was, I guarantee it wasn't as good as the stories these fine creators are putting together. The plan is to retell the origin of Superman and fill in the missing years in the lives of Lois, Lex, and Ma Kent prior to Superman's return.

In our regular books, Superman is just returning from an absence of his own, and the reasons for that disappearance are found in the final issues of INFINITE CRISIS and, of course, our yearlong adventure in weekly insanity, 52.

And speaking of 52, after reading last week's DC NATION, 52 editor Steve Wacker left me a note saying, "If you think doing the weekly column was the same as doing a weekly comic, then you can kiss my…..", well, you can fill in the rest. So, for the record, doing a weekly comic is definitely harder than a weekly column. Keep up the good work, Steve, and maybe in the next year or so you can take a day off.

Hey, now that the convention season is back in full force, we've decided to take DC Nation on the road. By the time you read this, we're just back from the first leg of the DC Nation Tour at Wizard World L.A. And we had a GREAT time, even though at the time of this writing, we actually haven't gone yet. But when we mix the best fans with DC Comics, prizes and an unexpected guest or two, it's guaranteed fun for all.

Keep your eye on this space and I'll fill you in on our next stops, hopefully before they happen and not after.

To be continued… dan didio

DC NATION

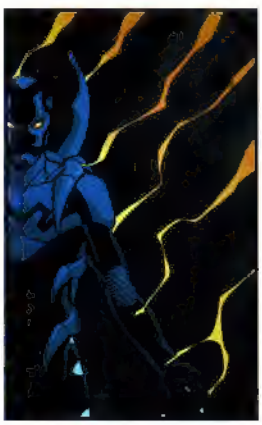
For a complete list of this week's titles, sneak peeks, breaking news and more, visit us at dccomics.com

Next in…

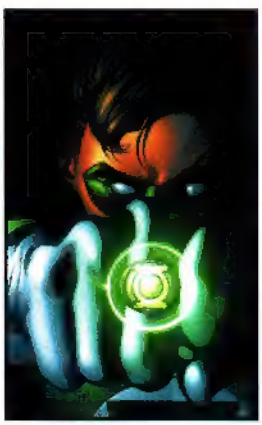
SUPERMAN #651

In a scant two weeks, the third chapter of our little adventure arrives in SUPERMAN #651! Are you ready to meet the Flea Circus?!

THE HOT LIST THIS WEEK



BLUE BEETLE #1



GREEN LANTERN #10

WARLORD #2

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